

## What Really Matters Matthew 14v34-15v28

*What or who is close to your heart, and how can you tell? What is close to God's heart?*

### 1) What God Wants (14v34-15v9)

The healing in 14v34-36, through contact even with Jesus' clothing, points us towards the more fundamental salvation only Jesus can give to us. The Pharisees and teachers of the law (15v1) come to Jesus to challenge him, wanting to know why his disciples (and Jesus himself, see Luke 11v38) break their religious tradition about hand washing before meals.

Jesus draws a sharp line between the command of God in Scripture (such as the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment about honouring your father and mother; v3-4) and wrong ways of applying Scripture (like the Pharisees' emphasis on hand washing and their *Corban* practice of v5-6). They have distorted Scripture and set aside the unchanging will of God to suit their own twisted hearts (v6-9). *Is it possible to glory in the word of God, to try to please or satisfy God through it, but to miss God's heart and so fail to glorify him?*

What God wants is hearts that are close to his heart (v8-9)—that's what's happening when there is true worship. It's the opposite of hypocritical religion and empty worship. The worship described in v9 is based on human teachings that hide true knowledge of God's heart and what he wants. God's word reveals God's heart so that we can delight in knowing and loving him. Approached in faith, it's the source of life-giving wisdom (see Isaiah 29v11-14).

### 2) What Grieves God's Heart (15v10-20)

If, like these religious people from Jerusalem, we refuse to listen to Jesus and wise up, we're stumbling around in the dark and headed for a fall (v14). The Pharisees weren't wrong about the need for cleansing but were wrong about the kind of cleansing that really matters (v17-18). The kind of things in v19 are the kind of things that grieve God's heart. Now, whether we know Jesus for ourselves or would count ourselves non-Christian, we know our hearts are like this: how rapidly does our hostility rise when we are hurt or injured? How quickly does our desire to be faithful in relationships fade when the other person can't deliver? How much will we give things when it costs us personally?

But God's law shows us his heart. He wants our hearts to be near his and like his—slow to anger, faithful to the end, self-giving, true, full of the kind of love we long to receive and to give.

### 3) What God Does (15v21-28)

What God wants (and therefore does!) is to take his self-giving, true heart of love and bring your heart close to his. And the beautiful thing is, you aren't left to clean your heart up yourself.

*Do you remember the log burner illustration?* This is what it means to know Christ, this is what it means to be in a life of worship: to have a heart drawn to Jesus (to his warmth, healing and love) and, "wonder upon wonder" (Isa 29v14) to get to have your heart thawed out. The Canaanite woman (v21-28) shows us the kind of approach to Jesus (v22, v23, v25) and faith (v28) that, knowing its falleness, puts itself under the table at Jesus' feet, beside the fire of his warmth and experiences the healing that comes from being near to him.

